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A N S W E R
T O A
P A M P H L E T
E N T I T L E D
R E F L E C T I O N S

ON THE
Impropropriety and Inexpediency
England, Church of - Articles
O F
LAY-SUBSCRIPTION
TO THE
XXXIX ARTICLES,
IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

ADDRESSED TO THE AUTHOR.

By Dr. Randolph Peck

O X F O R D,

Printed by W. JACKSON and J. LISTER,
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P. A. M. P. H. L. E. T.

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R. E. F. E. R. E. N. C. E. S.



Improvement and Instruction

OF

LAY-SUBSCRIPTION

TO THE

XXXIX ARTICLES

THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

ADDRESSED TO THE

Printed by W. Jackson and J. Johnson, in the Temple; and sold by Messrs. G. and J. Smith, in the Strand; and by Messrs. G. and J. Smith, in the Strand; and by Messrs. G. and J. Smith, in the Strand.

A N

A N S W E R, &c.

S I R,

I HAVE read your *Reflections on the Impropriety and Inexpediency of Lay-Subscription to our Articles*. I knew indeed before, that those who were Enemies to all *Subscription*, complained particularly of our *Subscriptions* in the *Universities*; but I never yet heard till lately, that ourselves, or our Friends, complained of them, or confessed that they were indefensible. I was indeed sorry to hear, that in some late Debates in *Parliament*, when our Enemies objected to our *Modes of Subscription*,

Subscription, some of our Friends, who were unapprised of the Nature and End of such *Subscriptions*, spoke unfavourably of them. But since you are disposed to *consider this Subject abstractedly from any Thing that hath been lately said or done in Parliament relating to it*, I am ready to join Issue with you.

You begin with a partial Representation of what was done in *King Edward the Sixth's Time* *. The *Articles* were agreed on in Convocation in 1552, and published by the King's Authority in 1553, just before the King died. But they were never established by Law, nor even were the Clergy themselves compelled to subscribe them. Had this good King and Archbishop lived to compleat the Reformation which they began, what farther steps they might have taken to enforce *Subscription* to these *Articles* neither I nor you can tell; and therefore all you have advanced on this

* See *Strype's Life of Cranmer*, p. 173. *Burnet's History of the Reformation*.

Head is nothing to the Purpose. It is probable, they would have taken some Method to secure the Profession of sound Religion in the *Universities*.

In Queen *Elizabeth's* Time, the present Body of Articles was agreed on in Convocation in 1562, and in 1571 they were established by an Act of Parliament, requiring all *Clergymen* to subscribe them. The *Universities* being governed by Statutes of their own enacting, it was left to them to do what they thought proper in this Affair. Nor have the Legislature ever since interfered in this Point. * But we find (and this by your own Account) that immediately after, in 1573, the *Magistrates of the University* required Subscription of all who took Degrees; and that too, as it should seem, by the Authority of the Government. † For when some proved refractory, Complaint was made to the *Chancellor*, and to the *Queen's Council*, who enforced what had been done.

* *Wood's Hist. and Antiq. Oxon*, 1573.

† *ibid.*

And

And in 1581 the *Earl of Leycester*, our Chancellor, wrote to the *University*, recommending to them to require all *Scholars* to be matriculated to subscribe to the *Articles of Religion* agreed upon : And a Statute was accordingly made for this Purpose, the same in Effect with what is now in Force. But here you are pleased to cast Reflections on the Character of this *Earl of Leycester*, which, instead of making to your Purpose, prove directly against you. We are no way concerned with his *Piety* or *Impiety*. What he did in this Affair, was doubtless done with the Privy and Direction of the Queen and her Council. If he was a Man, *who had not the least Regard for the Church or Religion*, this very Circumstance may convince you, that it was not his own Motion, but that he followed the Direction of his Superiors. *Subscription* therefore to our *Articles*, in this *University*, was in a Manner coeval with the *Articles* themselves : And why what was then judged necessary to secure us from *Popery*, should now be thought improper or inexpedient,

inexpedient, I see not. *But these*, it seems, *were troublous Times, and the Nation was in a Panic.* And are not these *troublous Times* too? Were ever more daring Attacks made upon our Constitution, both in Church and State? Were there ever more virulent Invectives published against the Doctrine and Discipline of the *Church of England*? *The two great Factions of Papists and Puritans* have been remarkably bold of late Years. And not only this, but the Doctrines of *Arius* and *Socinus* have been openly avowed, and diligently propagated with the greatest Freedom and Boldness. See you not, Sir, that this is at the Bottom of all their Attempts to set aside *Subscription*? Those, who a few Years ago pleaded for *Subscribing our Articles* in their own Sense, have now joined with the *Dissenters* in demanding the Abolishment of all *Subscription*. And shall we alter our Statutes in Compliance with such Demandants as these? Will any Concessions stop their Mouths? Will they not rather embolden them to
repeat

their Attacks with greater Confidence? Such a Step would, I fear, give no small Concern and Offence to many true Members of the *Church of England*, and great Triumph to its Enemies.

Give me leave to recommend to your serious Consideration, Dr. *Hallifax's* Address to the Heads of Houses, in his excellent Sermon before the *University of Cambridge*. This *University* will ever preserve that Purity of Faith, as well as Manners, which the *World* expects from her, and which will always be both her Ornament and her Support. And indeed, though speaking to yourselves, I must have leave to add, that you have sufficiently shewn you are properly mindful of your Trust, and will not suffer the Credit of this Seat of Learning to be put to the smallest Hazard. You are no Strangers to the Designs meditated by the Adversaries of our Establishment, and you are aware what a dangerous and deceitful Use would be made of any Indulgence, which otherwise, and in Times of greater Tranquility we might wish

to

to shew. The very Being of our national Church may perhaps depend on your Vigilance. And you are too wise to be diverted from guarding so sacred a Deposit, by the Menaces of its open Enemies, or the Perfidy of its pretended Friends.

—Think not, Sir, that I mean to number you among either of these. Far be it from me to intimate any such Charge or Suspicion. But the more unwilling I am to entertain any such Suspicions, the more it grieves me to find you inadvertently pleading their Cause, and talking their Language.

I need say little to the Statute enacted by the Authority of King James. Whether he were wise or unwise, this Statute only enforced what had been long ago enacted by the Wisdom of the University, acting under the prudent Directions of Queen Elizabeth. But I am sorry to find any of our Body should cast injurious Reflections on Archbishop Laud, the great Benefactor and Patron of this Place. This

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Statute,

Statute, you tell us, *was a Contrivance of Laud's*. But you are out in your Chronology. * King James sent us these Orders by the Advice of his Bishops and Council. But *Laud*, at that Time, was neither a Privy Counsellor, nor even a Bishop, nor could, I suppose, so early have much Influence at Court. And if this was as you tell us, *a thorough Blow to the Puritans*, I should think that none but a Friend of the *Puritans* could wish to see it repealed.

You declare very peremptorily against the *Impropriety and Absurdity of compelling our Youth to give their Assent to Doctrines, with the Proofs of which they could not be supposed to have the least Acquaintance*. A Person indeed of your Age, Understanding, and Knowledge, may reasonably call for Proof of any Doctrine, before you profess your Assent to it. But the Case is, I am afraid, very different with Regard to the Bulk of Mankind. Our *Catechism*, and our *Creeds*,

* See Heylin's Life of Laud.

contain Doctrines, the Proof of which many of those, who are called upon to assent to them, are but little acquainted with. Not only the *Nicene*, and *Athanasian*, but even the *Apostles Creed*, contains some Articles, not well understood by those who, in our daily Service, are called upon to profess their Belief of them. The *Oath of Supremacy* is required by Law to be taken by all Scholars at their Matriculation, and yet *the Proof of this Supremacy they cannot be supposed to have the least Acquaintance with*. But so much has been already said on this Head, that I need add but little more. It has been shewn that Assent may be given on the Authority of Others, that by our *Subscription* no more is meant, nor required of those who subscribe, than only an Assurance that they are Members of the *Church of England*, have no Objections to her Doctrines, but believe them on the Authority of their Friends and Instructors. This hath been shewn by several, and particularly by the Author of a Paper entitled, *The plain*

and obvious Meaning of the received Test at Matriculation. But this Author you are pleased to treat with great Ridicule, and that without Foundation. Not a Word can I find in the Pamphlet of the *Testimony of the Tutor*, and I wish you had given us less of your Wit, and more of your Argument. I have met with a Story somewhere, I cannot at present remember where, of a great Man (I think it was *Grotius*) whose constant Advice to his Son was, *My Son be serious.*----I wish you would imagine *Alma Mater* addressing you in the same style---*My Son, be serious.* Such Levity, my Son, little becomes you or me, or the Subject in Debate.

You tell us, that if *Dissenters send their Sons to the University*, we may have a fair Opportunity of extending our Arms to receive, and conduct them into the Church. I believe very few such come here; they have *Academies* of their own, and the *Papists* send their Sons to their *Seminaries* abroad. Our

Fore-

Forefathers thought it the wisest Way to keep both out. I am afraid, if we were to open a Door to admit them all, we should make but few Converts. On the contrary, they, if they could not convert us, might possibly turn us out of Doors, as they did last Century. We desire not to try the Experiment.

But we are sometimes honoured with the Residence of the Sons of foreign Protestants.---And we know how to accommodate them, and shew them proper Civility and Respect. I believe they have seldom come here with a Design of being Members of our Community. But if on beholding our good Order here, and seeing the Excellence of our Doctrine and Discipline, any of them should be inclined to join in our Communion, it will be then Time enough to admit them into our *University*, on their professing themselves Members of our Church.

I come

I come now to your Objections against *Lay-subscription*. You say that *our Articles are distinguished into Articles of Faith, and Articles of Doctrine; that the Laws of the Land require an Assent to the former of all Men, Laity as well as Clergy; but the latter are imposed on the Clergy only.* And therefore you think, *the same tolerating Disposition ought to prevail in our Universities.* But you have answered yourself in the very next Paragraph, where you allow that *the University is, by its Institution, a Seminary of religious and learned Education.* And a few Pages after you quote the Statute, which requires *Tutors to take Care of the Morals of those committed to their Charge, and to instruct them in the most approved Authors, but chiefly in the Rudiments of the Religion and Doctrine of our Articles, and endeavour to make them conformable to the Discipline publicly received in the Church of England.*----Is it not strange then that you should so confidently assert that *the University is a MERE LAY-CORPORATION,*
and

and rank it with those of the City of *Oxford* and *London*. The University is highly obliged to you for the Comparison; though even in these *Lay-Corporations*, a Test is required of those who are to be admitted to any Office in the same. The *University* is a *Corporation* of a peculiar Nature, instituted for the Education of Youth in sound Learning and true Religion, and principally of the latter. This her own Statutes, by you quoted, declare: This *the Princes who granted us our Privileges*, designed; * and their *Charters* express that these *Seminaries* were instituted *to bring up Persons who might be fit to govern, by their Learning, Knowledge, and Wisdom; might consult the Welfare both of Mens Bodies and Souls; and defend and protect the Christian Religion.*-----And I believe most of the Charters and Statutes of private Colleges run in the like Style. But these things, I presume, enter not into the Constitution of the Corporation of either *London* or *Oxford City*. And if it be the chief

* See Henry the Eighth's first Charter.

End

End of sending Youth here, that they may be *instructed in the Rudiments of the Doctrine of the Church of England*, surely it cannot but be proper at the End of four Years to expect of them a Test, as well of the Soundness of their Faith, as of their Proficiency in Literature. Nor can it be unreasonable to confine our Marks of Honour to those only who are in both these Respects qualified. There is some Plausibility in the Objections against requiring *Subscription* of young Men at their Matriculation. But these Objections have not the least Force against the *Subscription* required of *Graduates*. They may be *supposed*, by this Time, to have a competent *Acquaintance with the Doctrines, and their Proofs*; and if they *subscribe to what they know nothing of*, it is their own Fault. Their *Tutors* are required to instruct them in them. They themselves have the Statute-book put into their Hand; and know long before that they will be called upon to subscribe our *Articles*. They are obliged to read them over in the Presence

sence of the Person who presents them, just before they take their Degrees; and, if they have any Scruples, may beg his Assistance in removing them. Not that the Candidates for Degrees are supposed to be great Divines, or to have obtained a compleat Knowledge of all the Controversies about the Points contained in our Articles: This is scarce to be expected even of all the Candidates for Orders. Sufficient it is, that they are on reasonable Proof persuaded of the Truth of them. A Man may safely take the Oath of Supremacy, who has not read Dr. Barrow's elaborate Discourse on *the Pope's Supremacy*. And we may from good Grounds of *Scripture* be fully persuaded of the Truth of the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, though we are not acquainted with all the nice Controversies that have been raised about it.

All Persons indeed, who take Degrees in Arts, are not designed for the *Church*: nor will the Doctrines of our *Articles* teach a

C

Physician

Physician how to cure the *Scurvy*, or a *Lawyer* how to plead at the Bar. But it is to be hoped they will not be the worse *Physicians* or *Lawyers*, for having obtained a competent Knowledge of the Religion of their Country, and the Doctrines of the Church, which they received their Education in: nor can it be any Injury to them, when they apply for Academical Honours, to require their Subscription to them. There may have been *Physicians* and *Lawyers* too, who have been *Dissenters*, *Papists*, *Quakers*, *Jews*, and *Infidels*. If such want *Degrees*, let them repair to *Scotland*, to *Holland*, to the *Pope*, or to whomsoever they please. We desire to be excused from conferring our Marks of Distinction on such Persons: nor will our Constitution suffer us so to do. Let it be the peculiar Honour of this *University*, and her Sister at *Cambridge*, to be esteemed the Seminaries of true Religion, as well as sound Learning; and to send forth Men to serve their King and Country, who, to their Skill in their own Profession, have added a sufficient

sufficient Knowledge of the true Religion, and a Zeal for its service ; and are qualified to adorn, to defend, and to protect the Church of England.

In short, our *Statutes* about *Subscription* have been now in force for very near two Hundred Years, and are in a Manner co-eval with the *Articles* themselves. Nor have we, as I know of, found any Inconvenience from them. If there has been any Outcry against them, it has proceeded chiefly, if not wholly, from those, who cry out loudly against our Religion, and Church, in general. All Alterations are attended with Difficulty, and Danger ; and ought not to be attempted without very cogent Reasons. We know who they are, who so bitterly declaim against all Subscriptions : and it may justly be doubted, whether it be prudent to make them any Concessions, or give them any Advantages. But if those who really wish well to us, and understand the Constitution of this Place, should de-

fire, or advise, any Alteration, I hope we shall proceed with the most mature Deliberation, and the best Advice.

I need add but little with regard to our Power of altering, or repealing, our Statutes. I think in great Measure with you. Only I think that we ought to consider not only what Lawyers tell us we may legally do, but what we can do consistently with our Oath, to observe our Statutes. I cannot be of Opinion, that the Royal Confirmation of K. Charles the First could render our whole Body of Statutes unalterable, and that for the Reason you give, because this would render the Provision for making new Statutes, and explaining old ones, Tit. x. Sect. 2. § 2 and 3. totally nugatory, and useless. I think in this Statute the present Body of Statutes is distinguished into two Sorts, some wholly unalterable, as those which had been specially given, or confirmed by royal Authority, &c. the others alterable, or repealable at pleasure.

Of

Of the latter Sort, is the Statute requiring all matriculated Persons to subscribe, which was enacted by the University, by the Direction of their Chancellor, without any particular mention of the *Queen's* Authority. The Statute requiring Subscription of Graduates, was enacted by the *King's* special Command: and therefore I think cannot be repealed, or altered, without the Royal Licence. But it will be Time enough to consider this, when we are convinced of the Necessity, or Expediency, of making any Alterations.

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F I N I S.

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